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## CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

## OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

26 April 1961

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## MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

*+ 20 cys in reserve.*

*To be released only by H. Smith.* SUBJECT: Recent Developments in the Arab Attitude Toward the US\*

1. We now have in preparation two estimates which will cover in depth important elements in the Middle East: NIE 36-61, "Nasser and the Future of Arab Nationalism," scheduled for completion in August, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] scheduled for completion in September. We believe, however, that recent developments in Arab attitudes toward the US are sufficiently important to call to your attention at this time.

2. The Arabs have been suspicious of the Democratic Party in the United States ever since the Truman Administration supported the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948. They expressed fears during the election campaign that there would be increased US partiality toward Israel if the Democrats

\* This memorandum has been discussed with OCI and DD/P.

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won, but they have also said that they would judge US policy by the actions which the new administration took after assuming office.

3. During the past six weeks Arab judgement has crystallized rapidly as the cumulative result of several developments. Chief among these are: (1) the President's highlighting at his 15 March press conference of a \$25 million Import-Export Bank Loan to Israel, (2) widespread rumors in the Middle East of a new American plan aimed at achieving Israeli access to the Suez Canal in return for American-financed resettlement of the Arab refugees, (3) a weakening American amendment to the UN resolution supporting the Arab-Israeli Mixed Armistice Commission's condemnation of Israel for bringing heavy military equipment into Jerusalem, and (4) US opposition to a UN resolution proposing, inter alia, that the UN become custodian of Arab refugee property in Israel.

4. The Arab press, as well as many Arab leaders and officials, have condemned these events in strong terms. This has been true of generally friendly governments such as Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Lebanon, as well as neutralists such as the UAR and Iraq. Arab resentment has been spurred by what they consider the gratuitous nature of US gestures of support for

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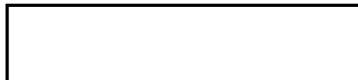
Israel and a widespread feeling among Arabs at the UN that the US delegation is deliberately slighting them. Such US actions as might have been interpreted in a favorable way by the Arabs, e.g. the appointment of Ambassador Badeau to Cairo, US financial support for the preservation of the antiquities on the island of Philae in the upper Nile, and the US stand against Portuguese colonialism in Africa, have gone almost unnoticed, being overshadowed by the events relating to Israel, that perennial touchstone of Arab policy.

5. Arab reaction has been, as usual, highly emotional. In those countries whose governments are friendly to the US, the storm will probably abate without any fundamental policy changes. Even in the UAR and Iraq, attention will wax and wane with the changing international scene. Nonetheless, we believe that a significant hardening in general Arab attitudes toward the US is now taking place. Tendencies in this direction are encouraged by the Arabs' apprehensions over Israel's nuclear project and Israeli plans to divert the Jordan waters.

6. If this trend is not at least checked, we believe that Arab distrust and hostility -- which has a peculiar capacity for feeding on itself -- will continue to grow. At the present

juncture, any new developments which the Arabs might interpret as evidence of further US partiality toward Israel, such as the visit to the US to see President Kennedy, which Israeli Premier Ben Gurion is trying to promote, would strengthen the unfavorable trend. Should this trend continue, the US could expect to find its position more difficult in dealing with the Arabs on a host of problems. This would be true not only of those immediately affecting Arab matters and the Arab-Israeli question, but also the US effort to counter Soviet claims to be the sole champion of nationalism and neutralism. Arab hostility would probably also be manifested on a wide range of issues in the UN.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES:



ABBOT SMITH  
Acting Chariman

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